

ESOTERIC EXTENSION OF TAROT TO DEVELOP SUPERSENSORY POWERS

LESSON 40

Transcriptions from Ann Davies' Class Lectures

Our key for this lesson is Tarot Key 15, The Devil.

You may be amused at the idea of putting the devil to work for you, but he is not, as you know, what the world thinks he is, especially not what exoteric Christianity thinks. The techniques to be used with this key are very effective indeed.

Let us consider the Qabalistic meanings of the Hebrew letter assigned to Key 15. Ayin in Qabalah, and used as a noun, means the eye as the organ of vision, that with which we see. The Emperor is assigned to the function of vision and represents the principle of sight. Here we are concerned with the eye as the organ of sight.

To this letter are assigned two concepts: bondage and mirth. This is certainly a picture of bondage. The two human figures have chains around their necks. They are chained to a half cube and are bound.

The other attribution, seemingly quite inappropriate, is mirth, meant as humor. Humor is a reaction to incongruity of appearance; and "appearance" in the works of the Eastern tradition is basically the idea that the physical universe is an illusion. They say that the physical universe, as we experience it through the outer eye and as we interpret it with the outer senses is, through our ignorance, a play or an appearance.

Qabalistic thought is not completely in accord with this view, and all the Eastern schools of thought do not wholly accept this idea either. Certain esoteric writings and practices of the Eastern tradition teach the belief that the physical universe is more than an illusion. However, most Westerners interpret Eastern scriptures as describing the physical universe, the whole of it, as nothing but an illusion. This is because certain versions of the Eastern thought try to prove that the most important thing to do is to escape from this illusion, to remove it, to do whatever is necessary to avoid it completely.

The Western tradition of Qabalah is not in agreement with this view. It teaches, rather, that the physical universe is not what we experience through our senses. For example, from a fast moving train, we watch the tracks apparently recede and appear to converge and meet. This is what your eye will see. But that is not what happens. Your eye sees something that is not so. Again, when you look at the "setting" of the sun, the sun is not "setting." One hemisphere of the planet, in its rotation, is turning away from the sun, yet we see the sun as "setting." There are many such instances. Our eyes do not record what actually occurs. Therefore, as we experience, we learn to reinterpret what we see. When, from the back of the train, we watch the tracks converge as we move rapidly along, we certainly see them as coming together. We will not stop seeing that illusion, but we do not accept it as true. Our consciousness makes a correction.

We watch the sun "set," and, since we are not astronomers, if we decide that the sun actually sets, it does not matter to us in our personal lives. It does matter in the study of astronomy. The astronomer sees the same thing that we see. The fact that his consciousness knows that it is not so does not stop him from seeing it as such. What we see

(and taste, smell, touch and hear) are the reports that we receive from our senses, but they are not necessarily true.

Some Eastern brethren in recognizing that reports from the senses are untrustworthy and having in meditation discovered other levels of awareness, seem to have come to the conclusion that the entire physical universe is an illusion. The Western tradition, however, says that the way in which we experience is the illusion. Reality resides in all we experience, but our senses extract only a portion of the real and therefore misinterprets what reality is.

Appearance is an essential element in the development of consciousness, even though what we experience as an appearance may not be what it appears to be. If you look through a keyhole at a large object, you do not see the whole object but a portion of it. If you think that what you see is the entire object, you will attribute to it a certain shape and size which may not be true of the object at all. You will have extracted a portion of what was there, but a portion of something real is not the whole reality even though you thought it to be the whole thing and misinterpreted it and in your ignorance had an illusion in relation to it. You nevertheless experienced something real. I hope you all agree that this is self-evident.

Qabalists say that the physical universe as we experience it is one thing; but our senses, our personality, are apparently evolving elements in motion and extract only portions of the Reality. Extracting portions, we create for ourselves all kinds of problems. The process of solving these problems sharpens our minds. Chess and mathematics are used by many to keep the mind from "rusting." They deliberately give themselves problems to solve in order to increase their ability. Evolution, problems and changes in the personality are for the purpose of developing self-consciousness, so that we become more specific and definite in our awareness. The illusion of separateness is there, but remember that although the illusion exists, the reality behind what we experience is real because it is a manifestation of the One Life.

The facts of electricity are analogous. When electricity passes through a resistant filament, the filament incandesces and gives off light. If it passes through a heat coil, we cook with it. If utilized another way, we can freeze with it, and when it passes through another device we have a sound recorder. There are many types of instruments, many works that it does, but it is all electricity. It is one power working in many ways, expressing itself through diverse forms to accomplish different things. Our experience, because it is partial, can be said to be specialized; some of us are teachers, some are scientists, some musicians; each is a specialized instrument. And, as Dr. Case says, "We do not try to read by a heating coil." We do not try to warm ourselves by a refrigerator even though the electricity being used is one and the same power.

The universe itself is said to be One thing, One Self, One Being, but It expresses and manifests Itself in all of these manifold ways. Whether you think of yourself as retiring and introverted or warm and outgoing, such attributes are not the whole truth about yourself. That is where the illusion lies. We become caught up in the expressions of partialness, hypnotized by appearance to the point where we develop certain fixed ideas about ourselves, partial pictures, and this is the illusion. This is the Devil of Tarot Key 15. We slander ourselves to ourselves by identifying ourselves with a small portion of our total being.

We are light and shadow. We are so caught up by partial expressions that we seem to be this or that . . . with the result that we create our own damnable situations. We are the ones who do it!

God is the doer of all; there is only One Being and that is God . . . That which acts in and through the manifold expressions. When you differentiate yourself from God, from That which expresses you, then you should think of yourself as the devil! We are light or shadow, a reflection of good or a seeming devil, one or the other.

In general semantics and philosophy, we repudiate the notion that anything is either black or white. They tell us that everything is a mixture, shades, and that we should not fall into this trap. This is true. However, in this case I want to make a point clear. Whenever you act as a conscious and separate item of manifoldness, we react from the standpoint of the shadowy side of our nature, the Devil aspect. When our consciousness holds the attitude of the unification of life, we react to the light, the God part of our nature. Why cannot we separate these reactions? It is because we are still unevolved, still growing, because our Higher Self, the Holy Guardian Angel, is still testing and trying and shaping us. It is because we still flounder on these interpretations and misinterpretations. We are trying to make sense of our experience while bound up in our personality, the little "I." The pronoun "I" is our most profound problem. In a way, it is self-hypnosis. We are bound so closely to appearance that we become too solemn about the personality, about what is spiritual and what is not.

A man once came to me and said, "I don't know why I am here. I read Dr. Case's book on symbols and I didn't get a thing out of it; in fact, I don't like symbols." I said, "Well, I really don't know either why you are here." He said, "I have no problems, I have attained peace and serenity. I don't smoke. I don't drink. I am a complete vegetarian; I eat only raw foods. I am also a celibate." I leaned over and said, "Tell me, do you at least swear?" He didn't get the joke at all. He very solemnly shook his head and said, "No." My humor got the better of me and I started to tease him for his smugness struck me as quite ridiculous. I occasionally claim kinds of behavior for myself that are not true at all, just because I think it would be effective to do so. There is humor attached to this, as well as some very good psychological reasons.

I said, "Well, I don't think we have a thing for you here, not a thing. I don't think you could use what we have at all." He said, "What makes you say that?" I took a cigarette and lit it and said, "I am the head of this Order, and I have not even begun to attain to what you tell me you have. As you can see, I smoke. I must confess something else; I occasionally like to have a cocktail before dinner, especially if I am out in company. I am not a vegetarian. Worst of all, when I am angry I occasionally swear!" He looked at me very solemnly and said, "My, I feel so sorry for you!" This is the truth! I smiled at him very graciously. I thought he was showing great compassion for such a sinner as I.

This is what I mean by no humor. It is an extreme example, though it is a real example. I could scarcely believe it, so I deliberately saw this man again to test his complete lack of humor. He told about someone whom he called a saint. He was a saint because he didn't smoke, drink, swear and was a vegetarian. He was against things that one should be against, and for several things one should be for. Some metaphysical and occult schools of

thought measure the spirituality of those around them by whether they do or do not follow the behavior I have just described.

But what do these "saints" do? They say to each other, "So-and-so is not spiritual at all." (He loves women or she loves men.) This, of course, is shocking. I wonder why God created male and female if it is shocking for them to be pleased with each other and with each other's companionship and with whatever might develop in terms of true and loving union. It is shocking, for apparently if you are "spiritual" you have no use for the opposite sex except for remote and chilly companionship. You would not touch them even with your finger tips, for that might be dangerously close to being carnal minded. They actually feel that this stifling of attraction between male and female has something to do with spirituality. They scorn the occasional cocktail. Jesus did not think it evil to turn water into wine, so they could all be happy at the wedding.

Anything overdone is unbalanced and is therefore a drawback on the spiritual path. An alcoholic or a compulsive eater or a sexually promiscuous person have let their appetites gain control. Anyone who craves or seeks anything without moderation is dependent upon having it.

It is the attitude that we hold toward our appetites and our control over them that is important. The idea that spirituality can be shown or not shown by the things we do or do not do is a sad commentary on the knowledge and sincerity of many who call themselves spiritual groups. I am sure that you know how to laugh at these ideas. I hope and pray that you will never fall into the trap of accepting them as your standard.

What are the standards? On the whole, if we use good common sense, and learn to look through the appearance (for this key has to do with the appearances), you will discover that spirituality is closely associated with basic kindness. It is that simple! This includes kindness to yourself as well as to others, kindness to your husband, your wife, your parents, your children; kindness to the world, your feeling about it and about humanity at large. There is a great strength in kindness when you feel it deep inside, when you express kindness from a feeling of unity. Spirituality has nothing to do with all the nonsense that has been poured into so many books for which so many majestic trees have been slaughtered.

This key shows you the slanderer, the Devil. For the devil is the kind of consciousness that slanders us to ourselves and to each other. We often forget that we must have just as kindly a feelings about ourselves as about others. We must learn how to look into the core of ourselves just as profoundly as we try to find the core of other things and people. When we do not know who or what we are, we strut on the stage of life ridiculously because we are dealing with appearances and with surfaces. We are caught up in illusions, and we feel great self-importance.

How often are we insulted when others do not recognize how marvelous we are. Our feelings are wounded; we are hurt or we weep. If we are criticized we feel hostility or anger or tears and heartbreak. When we react in this way, we are accepting others' standards of judgment. Our standard of evaluation should go beyond this world.

Would you be upset if a five-year old shouted, "You are a Martian, a spindle-legged Martian." You would laugh, would you not? Should it be any different if someone else criticizes you? If you are upset by criticism, accepting others' evaluations, you are letting yourself become lost in illusions. Evaluations we should have, but not on the level of appearances. We have learned how to correct mentally the apparent convergence of the track when the train is moving away. This does not disturb us. We know how to correct in our consciousness the apparent setting of the sun. The planet is turning. Our consciousness can correct those things because it has the proper evaluation of them.

We need to gain a better evaluation of our personalities and of ourselves, of the difference between our real selfhood and the personality. We should be able to chuckle to ourselves and begin to have fun with our own personalities. We are meant to. We are meant to enjoy our personalities much more than we do. The reason that we do not is that we are lost in these ridiculous evaluations and standards. Standards of behavior and evaluations of worth made by children who are not yet fully aware of what is really important in the evolution of personality.

This week make it a point to find the humor in some problem or situation that usually irritates or annoys you. Laugh at your own over-serious reactions to unimportant events. You will be surprised at how much more fun life is to live when you can laugh at your own personality. As you progress in this practice, you will begin to see that the devil of outward appearances is really the angel in disguise.